

**Massage Therapy Board Update**  
**Act # 2022-408**  
**June 17, 2022**

**The Alabama Board of Massage Therapy passed legislation during the 2022 Legislative Session that will not go into effect until July 1, 2022. The Board will be proposing rule changes that will be distributed and posted on the website for your review. You will have an opportunity to review the proposed changes to the rules and make comments to the Board for consideration. Below is an overview of the states and the entire act is available for review under “News”:**

- Add National Examination – MBLEx by the Federation of State Massage Therapy Boards Massage and Bodywork Licensing Examination (Page 4)
- Remove temporary permit (Page 5)
- Add acupressure as a massage therapy modality (Page 5)
- Remove congressional districts for board representation (Page 7)
- Add Executive Director Approval for Licenses (Page 9)
- Add Massage Therapy Establishments and Massage Therapy Schools to insurance requirements (Page 11)
- Add violations for advertising on any sexually explicit website or online platform that promotes prostitution, sexually explicit services, or human trafficking (Page 12)
- Remove old education hours prior to 1998 (Page 13)
- Remove exemption language from establishment licensing
- Add requirements for establishments to have one licensed massage therapist registered with the board to ensure the law, rules and regulations are followed – add criminal background check for non-licensed massage therapy establishment owners and all out of state owners are subject to initial inspection prior to licensing. This will assist in identifying sexually explicit or human trafficking businesses (Pages 15 & 16)
- Increase Fee Limits that have not increased since 1996 (Pages 17 – 19) Funding has been an issue for several years. With the human trafficking and sexually oriented businesses disguising themselves in the massage therapy profession and business, the Board’s investigative, legal, and administrative costs are increasing and are often not reimbursed through disciplinary proceedings or consent agreements. The Board is very successful in closing these businesses in cooperation with local law enforcement and other state and federal agencies.
- Increase Administrative Fines from \$10,000 to \$25,000 (Page 22)
- Establish continuing education requirements and provider approval through rule promulgation and allow the Board to change requirements through this process instead of requirements set out in the statute (Page 25-28)

**The Board has not had any significant law changes in many years, and this is an opportunity to update requirements, procedures and strengthen the complaint and disciplinary process for those that violated the statute, rules, and regulations. The illicit sexual and human trafficking business hides behind the Massage Profession that places an unwanted and unwarranted black mark on this upstanding, therapeutic profession! People need massage therapy and its benefits more than ever in this fast paced, stressful world we live in.**

**The Polaris Project has identified over 9,000 illicit and illegal businesses disguising themselves as massage businesses and almost 100 of those are operating in Alabama. The Board needs assistance in identifying and closing these businesses down so please contact the Board Office anytime you have information pertaining to this type of business or any business that is violating the law.**

**Proposed changes to the rules will be in sections and the Board adopted two proposed rules at its meeting on June 16, 2022, pertaining to Establishment Licensing and Fees. The two rules are available for your review and comment. The Board will meet on August 5, 2022, to review the comments and vote on the final adopt of these rules. Fee changes will not take effect until October 1, 2022.**

**The Board will also be revising educational and continuing educational requirements and proposing changes for review. Those are being prepared and should be available by the fall meeting.**

**Please never hesitate to contact the Board Office should you have any questions or need any assistance.**

**General Emails – [massage@alstateboard.com](mailto:massage@alstateboard.com)**

**Complaint Emails – [complaints@alstateboard.com](mailto:complaints@alstateboard.com)**

**Director – [keith@alstateboard.com](mailto:keith@alstateboard.com).**

**Thank you for all you do for the profession!**